



## Merr Shearn

*Artist. Mother. Teacher.*

For over seventy-five years, Merr Shearn has followed a life shaped by line, light, and curiosity. Merr's inquisitiveness stretched across many genres and passions—artist, mother, teacher, innovator—she wove them together with grace.

## Living Artfully

Art was never confined to a studio in Merr Shearn's world—it was part of the fabric of daily life. While raising her four children in the Black Forest of Colorado Springs, Merr cultivated a home where creativity and curiosity thrived. Living on 100 acres with two ponds, two goats, and no television, the family's days unfolded in rhythms of play, exploration, music, and art-making.

Colored pencils sat in a jar on the kitchen table. Tambourines, recorders, and song filled the rooms. Meals were shared with conversation and drawing close at hand. Friends came often—swimming in muddy ponds alongside frogs and dragonflies, wandering the woods in search of whatever the imagination allowed.

Inside and out, art was a way of seeing and being. It lived in the landscape, the meal, the moment—and was shared freely, joyfully, without ceremony. Merr's work grew from this way of living: rooted in nature, shaped by the everyday, and deeply connected to those she loved.

As a young mother, Merr started a community school. She believed deeply in education and in inspiring youth through creative expression. She introduced children to drawing and silk-screening, encouraging them to print their own work onto fabric. Each student was invited to sign their name and age on every piece of art—a small but profound act of authorship and pride. Merr later stitched these designs into quilts, celebrating the children’s imagination in lasting, tactile form. Their creativity was not only nurtured—it was honored.

Merr’s artistic journey has always embraced both refinement and play. Early in her life, her sketchbooks filled with strange and wonderful worlds—killer balloons devouring other balloons, pigs tied together with ropes—whimsical visions born from a sharp eye and a quick wit. Humor has been her quiet companion, even now at 92, where she continues to live with a sense of mischief and delight.

Throughout her career, Merr experimented fearlessly. She worked across silkscreen, quilt-making, dry pastel, gesso, wood, and steel—but her heart returned always to drawing. Her signature works—realistic, elegant renderings of fruit, vegetables, and foliage—are meditations on form, shadow, and light. Her peaches, tangerines, and lemons pulse with a quiet sensuality. She viewed shadows not as absence, but as distortion—a curious lens on reality.

Her process evolved with time. She drew on brown paper bags and wood scraps, layering Prismacolor pencils to create saturated depth. Indigo blue became her anchor for value and dimension. She saw poetry in the discarded: street-worn gloves shaped by forgotten hands, rusted cans, and crumpled cigarette packs left behind on the streets of Italy. To Merr, nothing was lost—only transformed.

As her children grew, Merr began teaching in the Art Department at Pikes Peak State College, where she inspired generations of students in design, color theory, drawing, and surface design. She also taught English as a Second Language and became an advocate for literacy, believing that access to language was a form of empowerment. Later, she served as Chair of the Art Department for twenty years, guiding a generation of artists with both vision and humility.

Her spirit of experimentation extended across disciplines. She befriended Ed Golding in the college welding department, leading to laser-cut steel works based on her drawings. She etched her fluid forms into wood, metal, and memory. Even during meetings or while watching the news, her hand was never still—always sketching, always scribbling, always seeing.

At 92, Merr Shearn’s retrospective honors not only a lifetime of creative output but also a life fully lived—marked by inquiry, humor, generosity, and above all, the enduring belief that art, like life, is meant to be played with, cherished, and shared.